

# GIRL HELD CAPTIVE BY ZAPATA TELLS HER STORY

Experiences of Dolores Escandon in the Stronghold of the Rebel Leader in Southern Mexico—Kidnapped by Members of His Band and Deceived by a Mock Marriage—Other Victims Besides Her



Miss Dolores Escandon in Day—She is Seated in One of the Barred Windows of the House in Which She Lives in Mexico City.

and almost immediately a good breakfast was brought to me by the other old woman, who had been in the room the night before. I was hungry, but it seemed that I could not eat, and I had scarcely touched the food an hour later when a young man, also dressed in black, came to the door and spoke to the old hag on guard there.

"The master wants to see her immediately," he said, and walked away.

The old woman arose and came over to my couch.

"Get up," she said, "Don Emiliano is going to give you an audience." Then the other old woman appeared again and together they led me out of the door into the sunshine and across the patio (courtyard) of the place. In this short walk of about 200 feet, another house I was able to see the place to which I had been brought.

Around an area of about a hectare ran a stone wall some fifteen feet high and evidently three or four feet thick at the base. At each of the four corners was a round tower, also of stone, with a door which gave into the courtyard. On the top of the wall, which was flat, black clad men, who I afterward learned were members of Zapata's "Death Legion," each carrying a rifle and with machetes and revolvers in their belts, were walking up and down.

I saw the big, bolt-studded gates through which I had passed, and then looking behind me, saw a one-story building about 100 feet long, with a flat roof, on which armed men also were walking up and down. Several children were playing in front of this building, which evidently was divided into several rooms similar to the one I had left, as this was the building in which I had been kept all night. In each of the doors of the rooms I could see a woman sitting. All were young, some of them apparently free to come and go into the yard, others with old women seated on the doorstep of their rooms.

Ahead of me was another building, also

he was unarmed. Seated at a heavy mahogany table, a few papers spread in front of him, he had evidently been making out some accounts, but as I entered he raised his eyes and fixed them on me for fully a minute.

not subjected me to this insult. Oh, I could kill you, and my father will kill you, when he finds out."

"Then I will marry you right now," he replied with a slow smile, and again his eyes fell on me. "Jose, Jose," he called,

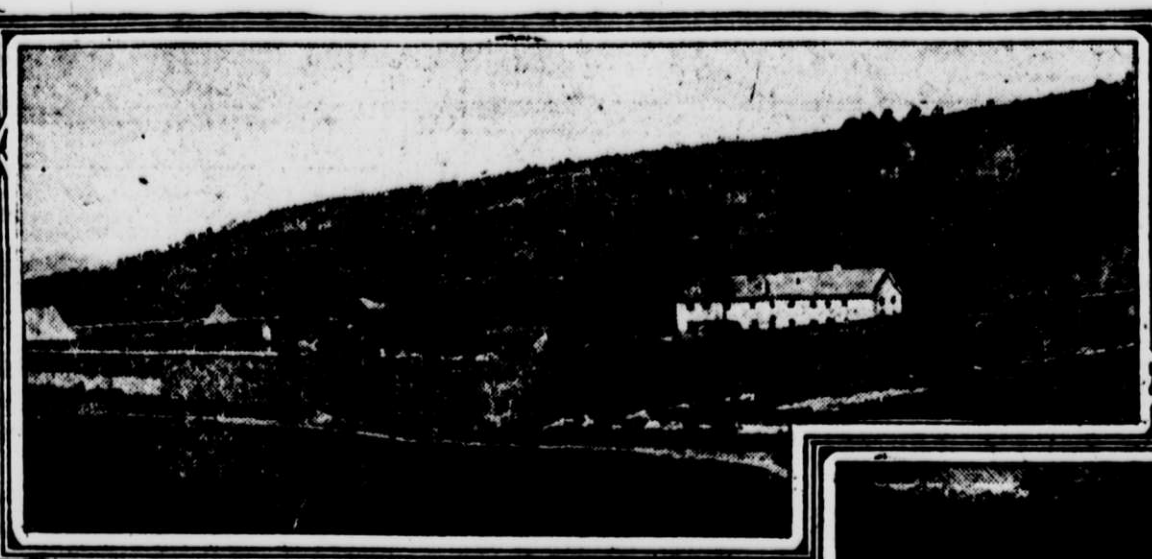
gone through the same marriage ceremony with Zapata as that through which I had passed.

Whatever may be Zapata's record he was good to me, and when my baby was born old Doctor Espinosa, whom I had

called priest who had performed the marriage ceremony was Abraham Martinez, right hand man of Zapata, former school teacher of Guerrero and an all around bad man, who had posed as a priest in several similar marriage ceremonies for Zapata. Before my baby was born the number of women in the place increased to twenty-five besides myself, but, as I have said, I did not pay much attention to this. I read a great deal, did a great deal of needlework, cared for my baby, and was happy, at least as happy as I know how to be.

In the spring of 1911 Emiliano Zapata took his force of 900 men and left Villa Ayala, putting in charge the fat Jose Mora, who lives near Mexico City with a force of rebels. This body of 800 men, always dressed in black, always well mounted and well armed, were a puzzle to me all the time I was at Villa Ayala. They guarded their master night and day; in fact they did nothing but guard him and his house, while a large number of men did the necessary work on the ranch. I have found later that they were the nucleus of his rebel force and that he had been waiting for the outbreak of the Madero rebellion against Diaz to use them.

After this Zapata came few times to Villa Ayala, and when he did come he spent much of his time with me. He seemed proud of our baby, and always called me his wife. On February 18, 1911, after the Madero revolt was finished and Madero was in the Presidential chair, Zapata came back to the fortified hacienda, bringing with him an Indian girl from Guerrero. He called all the women of the place together, told us briefly that we were



Zapata Fortified Hacienda at Villa Ayala

Eufemia Zapata, daughter of Emiliano Zapata, and Dolores Escandon



Abraham Martinez, Who, Disguised as a Priest, Conducted a Marriage Ceremony over the Girl and the Bandit Leader, and Emiliano Zapata, Who Kidnapped Miss Dolores Escandon

Mexico City, Aug. 1.—Telling a story of her capture by members of the "Death Legion" of Emiliano Zapata and her life while in the power of this bandit leader, who has raised an army of 4,000 men in the State of Morelos, Senorita Dolores Escandon, 20 years of age and pretty, has arrived in this city from her former home in Santa Rita, Morelos.

Emiliano Zapata, whose fortified hacienda of Villa Ayala, forty-seven miles from the national palace in Mexico City, has never been taken by Federal troops, maintained a polygamous household for nearly five years. In the spring of 1912 he met a young woman in the State of Guerrero, a girl who could be had only in marriage, for her father was a powerful man in the State and refused to sell his daughter as other men of the same country had sold theirs. Wherefore Zapata married this girl, dismissed the twenty-two women in his household and established his wife in the fortified Villa Ayala.

With these women went their thirty-four children. To each of the women he gave 500 pesos and a railroad ticket to any town within the republic to which she might wish to go. Miss Escandon, who believed herself legally married to Emiliano Zapata, was the last to leave, but when she found that she had been the victim of a mock marriage ceremony she took her 100 and her baby girl and came to this city. This is her story.

I WAS born in Santa Rita, a little village thirteen miles by trail from Villa Ayala, the home of Emiliano Zapata, and therefore about sixty miles from Mexico City. My father was a fairly wealthy hacendado (farmer), who lived in the village and worked his ranch of 15,000 acres, just outside. On the night of September 12, 1909, as I was walking down the street I was approached by an old woman, an Indian whom I did not know, who said to me in Spanish: "Your aunt Juana wishes to speak with you at her house and has sent me to have you come to her."

My aunt lived on the other side of the village, but as I knew nearly every inhabitant of the little town and did not fear any of them, I followed the old woman away from my own home toward that of my aunt. We turned off on the street which runs along the base of the hill just below the church, and as we reached a deserted part of this street seven or eight horsemen, all dressed in black, all heavily armed and all stark naked, surrounded the old woman and myself. I heard the leader of the band say a question of the old woman, who replied:

"There she is!"

The moon was shining brightly, but I could not recognize any of the men, two of whom leaped from their horses, seized me by the neck and held me tightly. As I tried to run, bound a handkerchief about my mouth as I began to scream, and lifted me to the horse of the leader, who, holding me with one arm, galloped away, followed by the remainder of the band. I knew I was being kidnapped, but I had no idea of the fate that was in store for me. I could not scream on account of the gag in my mouth, and the horseman who carried me held me so tightly that I could not speak to him, nor did I know how to get out of my predicament.

Then the horse was halted, allowed to rest a few minutes, and I was given a drink of water. Then the gag was removed from my mouth, I was blindfolded, and taken to the saddle, and once more we started off, this time at a slower pace. I did not speak to me, nor did I know how to get out of my predicament. I was blindfolded, and I was taken to the saddle, and once more we started off, this time at a slower pace. I did not speak to me, nor did I know how to get out of my predicament.

did not know of the future, else I should have killed myself.

We entered a yard, for I heard gates creaking. I was lifted from the saddle and carried across a yard to a door, through which I was carried and stood on my feet. The bandage was removed from my eyes and the gag was taken from my mouth.

The room was lit by a large electric light up close to the ceiling, which was high. There were no windows; apparently the only opening was the door by which I entered. The room was large, but the only furniture was a couch and a table, something like the holy water bowls in the churches.

Beside me were two women, neither one of whom was less than 40 years of age. They began speaking to me in low voices, asking me if I knew where I was. When I replied that I did not, the one on my right said:

"In the house of Emiliano Zapata, Villa Ayala."

I knew what that meant, for one of the girls in our village had disappeared the year previous, and it was reported that she had been forced to become an inmate of Zapata's household. I tried to scream, to fight the old women, anything to escape, but they held me fast, eventually undressed me, gave me a bath and put me to bed.

of one story, but higher than the other and with a sort of low tower or superstructure also of stone crowning the roof. In this tower there was a small door, but no windows, only seven small openings on each side, which I afterward learned were portholes for machine guns and rifles. As he sat down again he looked me over critically. I shrank to the floor, I tried to cover my face with my hands, with my long hair, which flowed uncombed half way from my waist to my feet. Still Zapata gazed at me. At length after what seemed an age of shame and sorrow he opened his mouth.

"She will do," he said. "Take her back."

Suddenly desperation seemed to overcome me. I thought of my home, of my father and mother and my brothers and sisters. If they only knew where I was! I felt sure they would wreck the stone wall and kill this monster to save me. As the old women turned me toward the door I whirled upon him, a despair in my heart which amounted to a determination to make him kill me if I could.

"You black fiend!" I shouted. "Why have you insulted me this way? Why have you brought me here? What are you going to do with me?" And then my words seemed stopped in my mouth, for he turned his snakelike eyes upon me, and it seemed as if I simply had to wait for him to speak. And I waited, it seemed a long time, until again the hard mouth opened.

"This is the girl from Santa Rita," said one of the old women, and as she paused I heard the door close behind me. There were no windows in the room, but Zapata rose, walked to the wall and turned a key, which flooded the room with electric light from a globe in the ceiling. As he sat down again he looked me over critically. I shrank to the floor, I tried to cover my face with my hands, with my long hair, which flowed uncombed half way from my waist to my feet. Still Zapata gazed at me. At length after what seemed an age of shame and sorrow he opened his mouth.

"She will do," he said. "Take her back."

Suddenly desperation seemed to overcome me. I thought of my home, of my father and mother and my brothers and sisters. If they only knew where I was! I felt sure they would wreck the stone wall and kill this monster to save me. As the old women turned me toward the door I whirled upon him, a despair in my heart which amounted to a determination to make him kill me if I could.

"You black fiend!" I shouted. "Why have you insulted me this way? Why have you brought me here? What are you going to do with me?" And then my words seemed stopped in my mouth, for he turned his snakelike eyes upon me, and it seemed as if I simply had to wait for him to speak. And I waited, it seemed a long time, until again the hard mouth opened.

and the man at the door responded. "Call Father Abraham," Zapata continued, in an even voice, "and tell him I would be married immediately."

He placed chairs for myself and for the old women in front of his table, and as he passed me, he put his arm around my shoulders and kissed me.

"My little fiend," he said, "you shall be my favorite wife."

I was so frightened by having his face close to mine that I did not perceive the import of his words for some days afterward.

Presently a slender man, with a hard face, but clad in the robes of a priest, entered. We stood up together, while the priest mumbled something from a little book.

"There, now, are you satisfied, Senora Zapata?" he asked, and kissed me after the ceremony.

I admit that I kissed him in return. I was more satisfied than I had been since they brought me to Villa Ayala, for I could not help being attracted by the man, had as was his reputation. How sadly have I been disillusioned.

Just then there came a rap at the door and a messenger brushed in for a word with Zapata. Hearing him to the end, the man I supposed was my husband turned harshly to the old women.

"Take her away," he said. "I have other things to think of now. And, take good care of her, do you hear?" My guards led me back to the house, but I was given another room, with fine furniture and every convenience, even a large bath. I was also given a maid, a young Indian girl of fifteen years, who told me that Zapata had nineteen other women companions in the same house. Fortunately she did not say "wives," and I did not think anything of the matter, as it is the custom throughout southern Mexico for wealthy men to maintain several establishments. I knew that my own father kept up three households, though my mother was his only legal wife. Later I learned that several of these girls had

known since my childhood in Santa Rita, come to attend me, spoke to him, asked him to tell my family where I was and that I was receiving the best of treatment from my husband, Emiliano Zapata. But the doctor only replied:

"Poor little girl, she is one of her head and thinks she knows me."

Later I learned the reason when I saw Jose Mora hand him a large roll of bills, enough to cover several months' practice in our little village.

The baby, little Eufemia Zapata y Escandon, was born July 14, 1910, and I do not believe, even at that time, my father or any members of my family knew where I was. I had no means of communicating with them and from that the world outside the hacienda of Villa Ayala until February 12, 1912, when I was freed by Zapata. The entire south of Mexico fears Zapata and he is the real ruler of the country, as one never hears of Government officials, unless it be of unfortunate army officers, in those parts of Morelos, Guerrero and Puebla ruled by Zapata.

I had good clothing; I was cared for to the best of the ability of many servants and I really believe I began to love Zapata as my husband, for I believed he was my legal husband. I knew nothing of his deeds outside and when he spent nights on marauding forays through the ranches of the country I supposed he was in Cuernavaca, Chilpancingo or Mexico City on business.

The women did not interest me. I held myself above them, as I supposed was his wife, and as a consequence most of them snubbed me and left me out of their conversations. I made friends with only one of them, Catalina Perez, and she did not tell me for more than a year after I arrived there that she too had been married to Zapata. Even then, so blind was I and so much in love with the bandit leader, that I thought she had been tricked, or was lying to me. Afterward I found out that the so-

not to remain at Villa Ayala any longer than the next day, asked each one of us where she wanted to go, and gave each of us a sum of money. To me he gave 500 pesos, and I suppose that each of the women received a similar amount.

Even then I did not take the announcement seriously, as I believed that I was Zapata's wife, until I learned that he had been married to the Guerrero girl some weeks previously while one of his raids into that State. Then I stormed about the place for three days, but was finally driven out by Martinez, the man whom I had supposed to be a priest.

I went to Cuernavaca, the capital of the district in which Villa Ayala is located, but could find no record of the marriage. I went to Cuernavaca, the capital of the State, and there could find no record, and finally I learned that even had Martinez been a priest, as he professed to be, the marriage would not have been legal, as there had been no ceremony before a civil official.

Then, with my baby girl in my arms, I went home. I was welcomed as one risen from the dead by my family. All my sisters and my mother had been sent to Mexico City when Zapata went on the warpath in Morelos, after the looting of Santa Rita by the Zapatistas, under personal command of my own husband, my father, brothers and myself also came to the capital of the republic, though so far Zapata has not looted our property or allowed his men to injure our crops. Possibly he remembers me with pity if not with love.

On a hot day last week a crowd gathered around a cake of ice that was left standing on the curb outside of a hat store on Nassau street. The crowd was augmented every minute with new arrivals anxious to see for themselves what was attracting attention.

The curious ones who succeeded in elbowing and forcing their way through the crowd to the front rank were surprised to see that placed in the very center of the cake of ice was a new straw hat of the latest model. It was a very clever advertising scheme on the part of the owner of the hat store outside of which the cake of ice was placed. "I wonder if the hat grew in there?" asked a little newsboy who had been gazing at the hat in the ice for five minutes.

"Naw," replied another newsie. "I tell yer how it got in there. Last summer when some feller was going up the Hudson his hat blew off and floated around. When the winter came and the river froze the hat froze in the ice. One of the icecutters up there who saw the ice up for the icehouses discovered the hat frozen in, so he cut the cake of ice up without letting the hat get out. Then the feller who owns this store bought the cake of ice with the hat in it and put it outside the store here. 'I'll tell you one thing,' said the first newsie, 'only I have to hustle around and sell my papers. I'd wait here until the ice melted and then I'd make sure that the hat inside was the real thing.'"